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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

JONATHAN SWIFT AND THE PROBLEM OF POWER: THE EXAMINER YEARS, 1710-11

BY

STEVEN D. SCOTT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF ....Master of Arts.....

DEPARTMENT OF ....English.....

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1987

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ISBN 0-315-37708-9

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DEGREE: Master of Arts

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Jonathan Swift and the Problem of Power: The Examiner Years 1710-11

.....

submitted by Steven Scott

in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

R. J. Merrett

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Date: April 9, 1987

For Sherri.

Abstract

Jonathan Swift spent a lifetime in search of that power which, he felt, he had been born without. This thesis documents Swift's struggle for power: from a power-less position at birth, through his rise to a position of importance in the Irish Church, to the summit of his political career, as chief Tory propagandist for Robert Harley's government in 1710-11: writer and editor of the Examiner.

Swift saw the writer's position as a powerful one, a position where one could shape reality in certain ways to achieve certain ends. Swift's conception of writing as power is what made him, for a time, the "first lord of English political journalists."

This thesis would not have come about without the help of several persons: my thanks to Sherri, for patience and faith; to Bjarne, for time and encouragement; to Dr. Robert Merrett, for helpful criticism, and assistance to an extent which even he doesn't realise.

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List of Abbreviations Used

PW: The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift. Ed. Herbert Davis et al. 14 vols. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1939-68.

Corres.: The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D. D. Ed. F. Elrington Ball. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1910-14.

Introduction

Jonathan Swift was fascinated by power. In his accounts of his early life, he is obsessed by the fact that he was born without power, neither land, title, nor fortune; in letters written late in his life, he has become obsessed with the fact that he feels he will die powerless. During his life, the means Swift chose to pursue power was writing.

My thesis begins with a short biography of Jonathan Swift, from birth to his assumption of his duties as chief Tory propagandist of the Harley government in 1710-11. The biography I have presented here is a traditional one, what I have called the "canonical" Swift biography. I have chosen not to enter the critical debate over Swift's parentage or various other biographical details that were, I felt, outside the scope of this thesis.

My second chapter deals with the problem of writing Swift's biography. Although a generally accepted biography of Swift has formed itself out of a myriad of critical opinions and much research, the process of arriving at an acceptable biography has not been simple. Swift was to write, "Whig and Tory ... have built their several Systems of political Faiths not upon Enquiries after Truth, but upon Opposition to each other ..." ("The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man," PW II, 4); in many ways, Swift's biographers have acted out a version of Swift's Whig and Tory. It was interesting to me to note the way critical

schools tended to "close ranks" around a particular version of a biographical detail, to the exclusion of "dissenters." The Writing of Swift's biography has thus become itself an exercise in power.

My third chapter is a description of the coming to power of Robert Harley and his predominantly Tory Parliament in 1710. The Examiner is traced from conception to birth.

The fourth chapter is composed of two parts: the first part discusses the conceived purposes of the Examiner as a shaper and molder not only of the public perceptions of the Tory party, but of the Tories themselves. The second part discusses the effectiveness of the Examiner. There is considerable evidence that the Examiner was extremely effective propaganda.

Chapter five deals with a longstanding debate among Swift scholars: what to make of Swift's shift in political alliance from Whig to Tory in 1710. There are at least four possible explanations given for Swift's Whig "defection": there are elements of truth in each approach; it is therefore likely that the truth lies in some combination of all of them.

My final, sixth chapter concentrates on a single issue of the Examiner (Number 16, 23 November 1710), as displaying many of the techniques employed by Swift throughout the Examiner.

My thesis thus traces the role of power in a certain

phase of the life of Jonathan Swift: from his birth into a powerless family, without land, title, or "fortune," to his position as the "first lord of English political journalists." Both for the biographer--writing Swift--and the propagandist--Swift writing--power plays a significant role.

1. Biography: Swift, 1667-1710

Jonathan Swift was born 30 November 1667 in Dublin of recently settled English parents. Swift was to write (in the short autobiographical piece he called the "Family of Swift") that his parents' marriage "was on both sides very indiscreet," largely because it was a marriage contracted without a "fortune," made or inherited, on either side, to recommend it: Jonathan Swift senior died "before he could make a sufficient establishment for his family," while Mrs. Swift (nee Abigail Erich) "brought her husband little or no fortune" (PW V, 192). In addition, Swift's father's death occurred before young Jonathan was born, though Swift is reported to have insisted that he was born "Time enough to save his Mother's Credit" (Pilkington, 68).

Swift's hereditary lack of a "Title and Fortune" seems to have bothered him greatly. Deane Swift remarks in his biography of Swift that in fact "... Dr. Swift could never endure to be called an Irishman, having really no sort of title to boast his genealogy..." (28). And Swift himself claimed that he "felt the [largely socio-economic] consequences of [his parents'] marriage not onely through the whole course of his education, but during the greatest part of his life" (PW V, 192). Swift apparently thought of himself as living his whole life in an effort to overcome his "disadvantaged" start. Swift makes this attitude quite explicit in a letter to Pope dated 5 April 1729. Swift writes: "... all my endeavours from a boy to distinguish my

self, were onely for want of a great Title and Fortune, that I might be used like a Lord by those who have an opinion of my parts; ... and so the reputation of wit or great learning does the office of a blue ribband, or of a coach and six horses" (Corres. III, 330-1). A "blue ribband" and a "coach and six horses" are representative of the gentry: power and wealth; Swift spent his life in pursuit of that power which, he felt, it had been his misfortune to be born without.

Although he was distressed that his immediate family was undistinguished, Swift is quick to point out that it was, at least, respectable: his father, when he died, "was much lamented on account of his reputation for integrity with a tolerable good understanding" (PW V, 191); and of his mother he writes: "If the way to Heaven be through piety, truth, justice, and charity, she is there" (PW V, 196). The Swift family was understanding, respectable, full of integrity; Swift yearns, instead, to be wealthy and powerful.

Swift's strange account of his early life ("The Family of Swift") continues: "... when he was a year old, an event happened to him that seems very unusuall; for his Nurse who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a Legacy; and being at the same time extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on shipboard unknown to his Mother and Uncle, and

carryed him with her to Whitehaven, where he continued for almost three years." Swift was too young, and apparently too sickly, to risk the return voyage to Ireland for some time, but he is careful to note that he was not mistreated: "The nurse was so careful of him that before he returned he had learnt to spell, and by the time he was three years old he could read any chapter in the Bible" (PW V, 192). In other words, Swift claims to have been kidnapped as an infant by his nurse, and detained by her with the knowledge and consent of his mother and of his uncle Godwin Swift (who had become a guardian and a source of income for the young widow and her children) for a period of something like three years.

Swift began his formal education in Ireland in 1673. Largely because of the financial backing of his uncle Godwin, he was enrolled in Kilkenny School, one of the best institutions in the country. In 1686, he graduated with his B.A. degree "speciali gratia," literally, "by special grace." It was a mark which would bother Swift for years: "... this discreditable mark as I am told, stands upon record in their College Registry" (PW V, 192). At times, Swift apparently exaggerated his "disgrace"; Mrs. Pilkington reports that he claimed once to her that he "was stopped of his Degree as a Dunce" (69). For some years, the "speciali gratia" story was treated with the same sort of relish as once were the stories of Shakespeare being an uneducated bumpkin, or of Einstein failing at his early

schooling. However, both Craik (12-16) and Ehrenpreis (Swift I, 57-63) discuss the "speciali gratia" ranking in some detail: the college records indicate that not only was it not the mark of grave dishonour that Swift claimed it to be, but it was not an unusual mark, either. Swift was, in short, not an outstandingly brilliant student, but he was not an outstandingly dull one, either.

Early in 1689, "the Troubles then breaking out" (PW V, 193), Swift left Ireland to visit his mother in Leicester; later that same year, he first entered the household of Sir William Temple as secretary, and helped to move Sir William and his household to Moor Park in Surrey.

The "Troubles" of which Swift writes can best be described as "religious conflicts." Their background can be traced to a beginning with the Cromwellian Settlement, and its (then) new trend towards making the question of religion one of financial importance. With the Restoration of Charles II to the throne, the old English Catholics had expected to regain all of the properties they had held at the outbreak of hostilities; the Cromwellian "settlers," on the other hand, those who had benefitted from the confiscation of Catholic land in the 1650s, were reluctant to give up their new possessions. Thus, as Downie writes, "Catholics were disappointed at failing to recover their estates in full; Protestants were aggrieved at having to surrender any land whatever to returning Catholics" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 22). In Ireland at

least, the Protestant/Catholic uneasiness had been stirring since the 1640s, providing an interesting background to Swift's Irish education.

James II was the younger brother of Charles II, and a Catholic. He succeeded to the English throne in 1685, and began his reign according to an "English tradition"; Downie notes that although James was a Papist, he was first of all an Englishman. In 1687, the Catholic Tyrconnell replaced Clarendon as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and a strong resurgence of Catholic feeling could be detected in Ireland. Downie notes that Swift's "... awareness of the vulnerability of the Anglican Establishment, particularly in Ireland, can with confidence be attributed to his first-hand knowledge of events which took place around 1688. Trinity College was, after all, the bastion of Protestant Culture in Ireland, and, as such, it had felt some of the Catholic backlash" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 22; 23). In June of 1688, a son was born to the Queen and James II, and suddenly the prospect of a Papist dynasty on the English throne became a real possibility.

William of Orange was the husband of Mary, James II's eldest daughter by his first marriage. William, therefore, had not only Mary's rights to succession to uphold when he led the "revolution" against James, but those of an English kingdom, as well. William of Orange landed at Torbay on 5 November 1688, and James and his family fled to France; England's "glorious, bloodless revolution" was over almost

as soon as it began. William of Orange, an old friend of Sir William Temple, became England's King William III.

In 1689 William III joined the rest of Europe in declaring war on France. Anti-Catholic sentiment spread rapidly around Europe; in Britain, that sentiment would have been felt particularly strongly in Ireland. By 1691, the fate of Ireland's Catholics was largely sealed when the Treaty of Limerick was signed. Roman Catholics were excluded from all political power. Downie notes that the Protestant ascendancy was not the only result of the Treaty; in 1699, the English parliament prohibited the export of Irish wool anywhere but to England. "This set the pattern for the exploitation of Ireland by England, and throughout the eighteenth century Irish interests were systematically sacrificed to those of the mother country" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 42).

This is the period and the atmosphere that saw the b rth of Swift's political ideas and his political prejudices; it also saw the birth of the two political parties that would play so large a part in Swift's life in England in 1710-14. In very simple terms, those who sought to exclude James (as a Papist, and therefore as a threat to so-called "authentic" British lifestyles, incorporating loyalty to the crown and to the crown-led Anglican church) from the succession to the throne were first christened Whigs; the threat of a civil war, with the accompanying anarchy and threats to propertied interests, rallied the

property owners to the side of the King; they were originally dubbed Tories.

In the summer of 1690, after the first onslaught of what has now been diagnosed as Meniere's disease, with its accompanying "giddyness and coldness of Stomach" that "pursued him with Intermissions of two or thre [sic] years to the end of his Life," Swift, "by the advice of Physicians, who weakly imagined that his native air might be of some use to recover his Health" (PW V, 193), returned to Ireland. However, by the autumn of 1691, he was back in England, going to visit his mother at Leicester and his cousin Thomas in Oxford; by the end of the year he was again employed by Sir William Temple as secretary in Moor Park. In 1692, primarily as a result of his former studies, he received his Master of Arts degree from Hart Hall, Oxford.

In May of 1694, Swift again left the Temple household for Ireland, and in October of that year was ordained a deacon of the Anglican Church. In January of 1695, Swift was ordained a priest; he was appointed to the prebend of Kilroot shortly thereafter, and took up residence there. It has been suggested that if Swift had wanted originally to become a member of the clergy, he should have proceeded with his clerical studies and been ordained shortly after graduating with his Bachelor of Arts degree. The "delay" between B.A. and ordination has been labeled "indecision" by some, and "aimlessness" by others; it has led to

speculation that Swift "fell into" the life of the clergy; specifically, A.L. Rowse (for instance) comments that "the Church ... [was] not Swift's first choice" of career; Swift aspired to other activities (likely political), but was never able to carry out his dreams (see Jonathan Swift, Major Prophet, 19). The evidence, however, seems to point to the thesis that Swift was a dedicated, religious individual who took his vocation very seriously. Louis Landa comments: "It was a time of early matriculation in the universities, and the youth who graduated at the age of 19 or 20 still faced an interval of three to four years before he was eligible for admission to Orders" (Swift and the Church of Ireland, 3). In other words, Swift entered the Church as soon as he was eligible, and as soon as an appointment was available to him.

In 1696, dissatisfied with the rural prebend of Kilroot, Swift left the parish in charge of his assistants, and returned once again to Temple's household; by 1698, he had resigned his post at Kilroot outright. Within months of that decision, in January 1699, Temple died. Swift's sister Jane reported the loss to Deane Swift in a letter dated 26 May 1699: "My poor brother has lost his best friend Sir William Temple, who was so fond of him whilst he lived, that he made him give up living in this country [Ireland] to stay with him at Moor-Park, and promised to get him one [a "living," a parish] in England, but death came in between, and has left him unprovided both of friend

and living" (Corres. I, 32).

By August, Swift had traveled to Ireland once more, this time as a chaplain to Lord Berkeley. Early in 1700, apparently as a result of a petition to King William "upon the Claym of a Promise his Majesty had made to Sir W T," Swift was appointed the Vicar of Laracor. This appointment included Rathbeggan and the rectory of Agher, as well as, later in the year, the prebend of Dunlaven in St. Patrick's Cathedral. The posting was a bitter disappointment for Swift, who had hoped for "a Prebend of Canterbury or Westminster" (PW V, 195). Landa surmises that Canterbury or Westminster were rather too ambitious for Swift to hope for; the important element in the story, however, is that Swift "... was disappointed in his first expectations of preferment, missing at the very beginning of his career that opportunity for a benefice in the Anglican Church in England which eluded him even at the height of his power and influence" (Swift and the Church of Ireland, 5).

By 1701, Swift was in London, and succeeded in persuading Stella, with her companion, Rebecca Dingley, to move to Ireland. That year saw the publication of Swift's first prose work (he had earlier published several forgettable poems): "A Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome." Swift then began a series of trips back and forth between England and Ireland. This was a period of frenetic social and literary activity for Swift: it was during this period that he first met many of

the leading Whigs in the social circles of London; 1702 saw him receive his Doctor of Divinity degree from Trinity College, Dublin; 1704 marked the publication of A Tale of a Tub.

From May of 1707 to June of 1709, Swift was back in England on a mission on behalf of the Irish clergy; he was to solicit "Queen Anne's Bounty" for the Irish Church. In feudal times, the so-called "First Fruits" referred to the first year's income of the Church in a given benefice; it was customary to pay this stipend to the Pope in return for the patronage that had secured the position in the first place. Under the reforms of Henry VIII, the First Fruits reverted to the Crown, and in 1703-4, Queen Anne established a trust fund under which the First Fruits payments were used in the Church of England to augment poor church livings. The "Twentieth Parts," likewise, was a traditional Papal tax of one-twentieth of the annual income of the benefice. This fund, too, had reverted to the Crown under Henry VIII, and had been remitted by Queen Anne. The Irish Church, understandably, was anxious to secure equivalent grants for itself as those that were being accorded to the English Church, and had sent Swift on its behalf to secure "Queen Anne's Bounty" for them (Richard I. Cook, Jonathan Swift as a Tory Pamphleteer, xiii-xiv, passim).

When Swift first arrived in London to petition on behalf of the Irish clergy, he went to great lengths to

secure a meeting with Godolphin (a Whig),[1] who informed him that the cost to the Irish Church of the remission of the First Fruits would be political, and high;[2] the remission would involve the Church's repeal in Ireland of the Sacramental Test Act. Under the Act, holders of political office were obligated to be Anglican; the Test of their sincerity was that they were obliged to take part in an Anglican communion service at least once a year. Swift saw the Test Act as essential to preserve the "purity" of the political system against Roman Catholics, "Dissenters" and "Independants." (In a letter to Tisdall, 3 February 1704, Swift calls "Dissenters and Independants" "lice" and "fleas.") The Test Act was designed, in theory, to ensure that only practicing Anglicans could hold political office; Swift saw its repeal in Ireland as too high a price, even for Queen Anne's Bounty, and Swift decided to reject Godolphin's offer, and continue negotiations, which he did, with little success.

The year 1709 saw Swift's first introduction to Addison and Steele; he began writing the first Bickerstaff Papers; he was involved with the first editions of the Tatler; and he also wrote "An Argument Against ... Abolishing Christianity." By the end of June, however, Swift had returned to Ireland, discouraged, his mission on behalf of the Irish Church unfinished.

The year 1710 brought the infamous and ill-advised Sacheverell trial for treason,[3] and with its political

blunderings, the fall of the Whigs from parliamentary power. Robert Harley was returned to power with a large majority, predominantly Tory. By the beginning of September, Swift was back in England to renew his solicitations, this time with a new ministry.[4] It was on this trip that the Journal to Stella was begun.

The beginning of October marked the first meeting of Swift with Harley,[5] who promised Swift that he would "work on" the Queen's Bounty. Shortly thereafter, Harley assured Swift that his request would certainly be granted;[6] 2 November 1710 saw the publication of the first edition of the Examiner to be produced under Swift's hand.

2. The Biographers: Truth vs. Power

One of the problems with reconstructing Swift's biography is the fact that few accurate records of such events as births survive. There are certain town registers and baptismal certificates extant, but the degree of accuracy sought by biographers is difficult or impossible to achieve from the few available records. Later biographers have been forced to rely extensively both on earlier biographies and on Swift's own writings for their data.

The paucity of biographical information on Swift is not a discovery of modern scholarship. Deane Swift recognised as early as 1755 that "The character of Swift is on the whole so exceedingly strange, various, and perplexed, that I am afraid that it can never be drawn up with any degree of accuracy; the materials for it, nevertheless, are most of them to be collected from his own writings" (An Essay Upon the Life, Writings, and Character, of Dr. Jonathan Swift, 359). John Forster, writing in 1875, agrees that Swift's biography is difficult to unravel: "... there is hardly anything really authentic excepting what was written by himself. Famous men may suffer quite as much by excess as by want of curiosity about them, and more would certainly now have been known of Swift if less had been written respecting him in the half-century following his death" (The Life of Jonathan Swift, 27-8).

Both Forster and Deane Swift direct the student of Swift's life to Swift's own writings as the best source of information about Swift, yet Swift wrote very little about himself; in addition, both Deane Swift and Forster agree that writings about Swift can be inaccurate, or confusing, at least in part because of their sheer bulk. The two major sources of information concerning Swift's early life are both suspect, on the one hand because of brevity; on the other, because of expansiveness.

Swift's most extensive autobiographical piece is the short "Family of Swift." It was first published in 1755 as an appendix to Deane Swift's biography, and has become something of a "touchstone" for biographers interested in Swift's early life. The so-called "autobiographical fragment" is, however, not without its problems: first, some of the events it recounts are very strange; second, it lacks precision and is very brief; third, the reason it was written at all remains unclear.

The strangest of the events that Swift includes in the "fragment" is the account of his kidnapping. Swift calls it "very unusuall," but his tone in recounting the story is rather flippant, or almost off-hand; it is not treated as "unusuall." In addition, the focus of the account is the nurse, and the urgency with which she was forced to travel to Whitehaven, instead of the one-year-old infant stolen from his mother into another country.

The brevity of the "fragment" and the general

carelessness Swift shows for such things as dates are also curious features of a piece that was intended, if Herbert Davis is correct, to dispel some of the many false rumors that had sprung up about the life of the "mad Dean"; Davis believes that "Swift may never have intended to do more than provide an introductory sketch to the well-known facts of his public career." Davis goes so far as to suggest that Swift's notable "lack of care," especially with regard to dates, is an indication of the authenticity of the "Family of Swift" (see the "Introduction" to PW V, xxii).

The only surviving date in the piece is the date of the death of Thomas Swift, Jonathan Swift's grandfather. Of his own birth-date, Swift writes only that "He [I] was born in Dublin on St. Andrew's Day" (Davis notes that there was something that could have been a date, "completely obliterated in the margin" [PW V, 192]). Swift's kidnapping happened to him when he was a year old, and lasted "for almost ['two' erased] three years" (PW V, 192); Swift's first stay in the Temple household lasted for "about two years" (PW V, 193); Swift claims to have met the king "although he [Swift] were then under ['three and' erased] twenty ['one' added above the line] years old" (PW V, 194); Swift was "the onely son of Jonathan Swift, who was the seventh or eighth son of Mr Thomas Swift above mentioned" (PW V, 191); Jonathan Swift senior died "young, about two years after his marriage" (PW V, 191), apparently without cause. If the account is what Davis claims it is,

it is not very successful; it has none of the authority or precision of a piece intended to regulate the speculation surrounding the mysterious dean: here, instead, Swift becomes the object of a romantic-sounding kidnapping when a child; most of the dates connected to him have been removed from the account, or are qualified with words like "about," or are altered; Swift does not seem to know the precise number of uncles he had, or the cause of his father's death. In short, rather than eliminate fictions concerning Swift, the fragment serves to enshrine them; the mysteries are given authority, because they come from Swift's own hand.

The third strange characteristic of the "autobiographical fragment" is the fact that it was written at all, in the form in which it now stands. The piece is entitled "Family of Swift," and a full half of it is devoted to a sketch of the Swift family tree. This is despite Swift's claim that he despised his family. There are scattered references to his aversion for his family, at varying levels of intensity, running throughout Swift's correspondence: "The young gentleman who delivers you this, lyes under one great disadvantage, that he is one of my Relations ..." (Corres. V, 137; 16 February, 1739); "I hate all Relations ..." (Corres. V, 145; 17 April, 1739).

The bulk of the rest of the information from Swift concerning his own life exists as fragments, as letters, as journals sporadically maintained, as (second hand)

transcriptions of verbal stories. Indeed, many of the very early biographies claim to exist largely, or even entirely, of stories by Swift himself; Laetitia Pilkington's Memoirs, for example, makes this claim: "I set down nothing but what I had from his own mouth ..." (69).

There is some difficulty in deciding which of the stories are "true," and which deserve to be relegated to what Irvin Ehrenpreis has called "legendary Swiftiana" (Swift I, ix): that is, which are stories by Swift, and factual; which are stories by Swift, and fictional; and which are stories that are purely fictional. In fact, Swift's account of his own past shows a tendency to vary with time. Despite the general truth of J. A. Downie's sensible assertion that "men do not usually invent stories to explain the circumstances of their birth," Downie is forced to admit within two pages that "[Swift] had a happy knack of altering his recollection of the past to fit in with his current prospect of things" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 3; 5). Swift's penchant for fictionalising his past has long been recognised. Craig Ulman, for instance, writes that "Swift was expert at exchanging fact and fiction" (Satire and the Correspondence of Swift, 9), and the following account from Deane Swift is typical: "Sometimes he [that is, Jonathan Swift] would declare, that he was not born in Ireland at all; and seem to lament his condition, that he should be looked upon as a native of that country; and would insist, that he was

stolen from England when a child, and brought over to Ireland in a band-box" (26). Although Deane Swift obviously regards the "band-box" story as a fiction, there are other stories that he has transcribed as fact. Some of these are probably accurate, and as such can contribute to our knowledge of Swift and of his times; however, many of them appear to be either inaccurate or purely fanciful, and it is difficult to know where each one fits on the sliding scale that ranges from fact to fancy. This is true, not only in Deane Swift's account, but in virtually every account of the early life of Swift.

The task of the biographer is thus largely an exercise in judgment and interpretation. Edward W. Said has commented, I think pertinently, in another context: "All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation. That is not to say that facts or data are nonexistent, but that facts get their importance from what is made of them in interpretation" (Covering Islam, 154). Biographers have been making interpretations, conceiving and advancing theories to catalogue, clarify, classify and explain Swift's life, almost since the moment of his death.

Denis Johnston, for instance, notes the "sketchy" nature of the "Family of Swift." What Herbert Davis has called "carelessness," however, Johnston calls a mass of "dissimulation and contradictions"; he considers the

inconsistencies to be "deliberate," and goes so far as to label them "lies" (In Search of Swift, 215; 72; 9; 217, and passim). Johnston singles out for special attention the fact that Swift writes that he was born on St. Andrew's Day (November 30) in Dublin, but includes no year with this date. Johnston's thesis is that the "deliberate lies" in Swift's autobiographical fragment (in particular, the ones concerned with dates) are attempts to "cover up" the true circumstances of Swift's parentage; this is because, according to Johnston, "the elder Jonathan [Swift] was well and truly dead before the conception of the future Dean" (Johnston, 72).

Johnston's theory is that Swift's biological father was the elder Sir John Temple, Sir William Temple's father. Johnston's further claim is that Stella was William Temple's biological daughter. Thus, in Johnston's estimation, Swift and Stella were uncle and niece. Johnston attempts, using this revised version of Swift's parentage, to explain away many of the strangest, most perplexing aspects of Swift's biography: for instance, if Swift were a Swift in name only, the coupling of his veneration for his mother with his intense dislike for most of the rest of his family (who were "of all Mortals what I most despise and hate" [Corres. V, 135-6, and elsewhere]) would make some sense; the reason why Swift "was promptly shipped out of the country soon after he was born" (Johnston, 72) would become apparent (Johnston's version of

Swift's kidnapping is that it was an elaborate plot to preserve the honour of the Temple household); the strange (i.e. apparently non-sexual) relationship between Swift and Stella would have a plausible explanation; and, of course, the inconsistencies and missing information in Swift's autobiography would be there (or not there) with a purpose.

The world of Swift biography is divided into two distinct "schools." One school of biographers holds that Swift was precisely whom he claimed to be in his autobiographical fragment. This view is held despite the paucity of information concerning Swift's early life, despite the rather fantastic nature of the information that does exist, and despite the eccentric image of Swift that is conjured by the available information. Members of this school include among many others Deane Swift, Thomas Sheridan and, more recently, Irvin Ehrenpreis. Ranged against this first battery of biographers is a group that considers itself to be rather more sceptical than the first. This school includes such scholars as Orrery, Thackeray and Denis Johnston. The second group claims that the inconsistencies and eccentricities of Swift's autobiography are too pronounced for it to be believed at face value; thus this group is largely responsible for the theories that Swift was actually the son of someone other than Jonathan Swift senior, whether that "real" father was Sir William Temple, or, as Johnston believes, Sir John Temple. The battle between these schools of thought

accounts for much of what A. C. Elias has called the great "variety and vehemence" that has long been an identifying characteristic of Swift criticism (Swift at Moor Park, x).

Elias sees the ongoing debate over Swift's biography as one "between eager credulity on the one hand and defensive hostility on the other," a debate that results in "few sober attempts to sort out" the facts of Swift's life (140). Indeed, what communication there is between the two schools seems to be largely taken up with rebutting the other's position, when that other position is acknowledged. Thus Denis Johnston, while admitting that his own view of Swift's parentage "can never be proved," states flatly that "there is a colossal mass" of material that "cannot be accounted for" if Johnston's own version of Swift's parentage is not the correct one (217). Irvin Ehrenpreis, on the other hand, makes no mention of Johnston's work in his own massive, three-volume biography of Swift. Ehrenpreis begins his first volume with the pronouncement that "I have been less concerned to add than to eliminate fables; and those readers who look for my views on a long train of legendary Swiftiana will search in vain." Part of the "legendary Swiftiana" that remains undiscussed and unacknowledged by Ehrenpreis is any theory that calls into question the parentage of Swift and/or Stella: "Here, neither Swift nor Stella is made a bastard" ("Preface," Swift I, ix). Ehrenpreis is almost as curt about Swift's alleged kidnapping, and subsequent critical questioning of

its authenticity: "Swift accepted the kidnapping as truth ..." (Swift I, 31). One can only add that he wrote it as truth; but, then, he wrote many things as truth that were not strictly factual.

In short, Johnston's entire book is dismissed outright by Ehrenpreis, without question and without discussion. The technique used by Ehrenpreis is rather like one of Swift's many satiric techniques. John Bullitt, in his useful book, has singled out this one as one of Swift's more important ploys: "By disdaining to exert himself directly against an opponent, the ironist invites the reader to join him ... on the mountaintop of truth" (Jonathan Swift and the Anatomy of Satire, 50). Ehrenpreis's "mountaintop" is essentially the orthodox, conservative, "canonical" biography of Swift.

The weight of critical opinion is poised behind Ehrenpreis. J. A. Downie, for instance, writes that, despite any speculation that "the story of [Swift's] kidnapping" may be "merely one more elaborate fiction of Swift's old age to extenuate the fact of his Irish birth," Swift's parentage must remain unquestioned: "There is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that Swift was the son of anyone other than Jonathan Swift senior" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 5; 342).

John Middleton Murry has no question as to Swift's parentage, either; his argument against Johnston is that the close relationship between Sir William Temple and

Jonathan Swift (a relationship that Johnston singles out for special comment) was not a unique one. Murry points out that Temple also had an interest in Swift's cousin Thomas; "once this is admitted, Mr. Johnston's theory falls to the ground" (Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography, 497). In fairness to Murry, given the dates of publication of their respective books, Murry could not have read Johnston's book (only a series of articles Johnston published in advance of the book, all to do with the same theory) when he wrote his critique of Johnston's general thesis. However, the close relationship between Jonathan Swift and William Temple is not the essential element to Johnston's argument that Murry claims it is. The relationship is an instigating element of Johnston's investigation, not an essential conclusion of it; Murry has not, in fact, made Johnston's theory "fall to the ground."

Herbert Davis also has no time for the theories of Denis Johnston; he notes that Johnston's conclusions are too severe for the data he uses. Davis's discussion concludes on an interesting note: "[Johnston] wishes by one stroke to destroy the mystery of Swift, to solve all the riddles and take away all the strangeness out of the story of his life" (Jonathan Swift, 34). Somehow the preservation of mystery, the propagation of strangeness is seen by Davis as one of the primary goals of Swift biography; Johnston's striving to do the opposite is seen as highly suspect, rather than intellectually challenging

or interesting.

A. L. Rowse has commented that "What men of genius write about themselves is always more interesting than what others write about them ..." (Jonathan Swift, 9). The fact that what Swift writes about himself is "interesting" is due in part to Swift's penchant for blurring the distinction between fact and fiction.

One of the conclusions to be drawn from the critical debate about Swift's biography is that biographies, in that they rely heavily on interpretation, are a kind of re-ordering of facts to suit certain theories; that is, in some ways, they are a kind of fiction themselves, and should not be thought of as strictly factual. The second obvious conclusion is that there is a great deal of power exercised by critics in Swift biography. The closing of critical and scholarly ranks around the canonical biography of Swift against what are perceived as the attacks of scholars like Denis Johnston is a manoeuver not unlike the sort of technique that Swift uses in his own writing: he either disdains to address his opponent at all, or he attacks using arguments that are not, in fact, arguments. They are techniques that are familiar ones to scholars of the Examiner papers, in particular, for they are the ones that Swift uses most frequently, and with the most success there.

3. The Birth of the *Examiner*: The Press as Politics

K. B. Smellie, in his book *Great Britain Since 1688: A Modern History*, notes that the "Great Revolution," rather than diminishing in significance, was ongoing and profound. By the beginning of Queen Anne's reign in 1702, London had been transformed "from a medieval town" into a "cosmopolitan city." This outward, obvious change in sophistication was reflected and supported not only by what was then an astonishing "marriage of the ancient monarchy to new forms of popular control," but also in rapidly increasing levels of literacy.[1] These changes, in their turn, "produce[d] strange and potent forms of political power such as a pamphlet literature, a periodical press, and party groups" (Smellie, 4). D. H. Stevens agrees; he notes that "Popular concern over state affairs had grown gradually after the conclusion of the Revolution in 1688, an event that had given men new reason for studying the conduct of government...."[2] [T]he reign of William III had been a period conducive to free speech and individual thinking, and as a result well-organised parties began to displace in power the small groups of autocratic nobles. This was not accomplished by 1702, but the effect of changing conditions had appeared in all social and literary activity" (29).

Dorothy Marshall comments that, following the emergence, in 1702, of London's "first regular daily paper" (*Eighteenth Century England*, 66), the popular press enjoyed

tremendous, sudden growth and power, until, with the appearance of the Tatler in 1709, "the periodical essay became one of the favorite literary vehicles of the century" (Marshall, 67). By 1710 (that is, within a scant eight years), daily and weekly literary, political and news journals were virtually essential commonplaces of London life: so much so, that statistics like those cited by Thomas Atteridge are significant: "In 1710 journals featured either news or commentary with newspapers outnumbering journals of opinion by more than three to one" (Knavery and Artistry Sublime: Swift's Examiner, 1710-11, 16). And W. A. Speck comments: "It was ... the first age where the profession of writing could sustain a livelihood for a great many people" (Stability and Strife, 49). Michael Foot goes so far as to suggest that "The real political battles of [Queen Anne's] reign were not fought in the palace; Parliament and the coffee-houses provided the arena where Whig and Tory were locked in deadly combat..." (The Pen and the Sword, 369).

The journalistic profession, then, during the period when Swift began to write the Examiner for Harley's Tory regime was a rapidly growing, exciting one. "The printing press was the formidable new weapon in politics. Whig and Tory ministers competed for the services of the men who were learning the trade. The literary courtiers who had once looked to an omnipotent King now found themselves courted.... [W]riters had gained something much more

substantial than a new dignity. Immense power in the state might soon be theirs" (Foot, 77).[3]

There were two types of journals in 1710 London: Atteridge has called them "news" and "commentary" journals, and Downie agrees: "The periodical essayists were in contrast to the news reporters. They [the essayists] were the genuine propagandists. Defoe and Swift [for example] aimed not merely at influencing public opinion, but at uniting party political opinion within Parliament" (Attridge, 17; Robert Harley and the Press, 7). This distinction does "not reflect a belief that editorializing and reporting were distinct activities. Reporting was usually little more than undigested data moderately distorted; commenting usually neglected particular facts in favor of polemical generalizations" (Attridge, 17). That is, the two types of journals differed in degree, rather than in kind. The Tory Examiner was a journal that fell generally into the latter category; it was interested in neither "factual presentation" nor "rational argumentation,"[4] two virtues held to be desirable in present-day journalism; instead, "the Examiner commented" (Attridge, 45; 17).

The Examiner was "the official organ of the unformed [Tory] party" (Stevens, 31). That is to say, it was the means by which Tory party policy was both made and propagated. To speak of a "political party" in Queen Anne's England is not the same thing as to speak of a political

party in the twentieth century. Michael Foot summarises the situation well:

> The Whig and Tory parties of Queen Anne's time were not political parties in the modern sense. They did not possess the paraphernalia of elected or nominated leaders, party conferences or national organisations. Yet ... many of the features of [the modern] party system were being developed.... Considering how novel was the idea of party, the cohesion of the Whigs or the Tories ... [is] a more remarkable feat than their apparent lack of homogeneity compared with modern political parties.
>
> ... The Cabinet Council was not a cohesive body, with its members bearing collective responsibility. Both the predominantly Whig ministry of Lord Godolphin which was overthrown in the autumn of 1710 and the predominantly Tory ministry which succeeded it were 'coalitions.' This term is an anachronism, but [it is] the most convenient to describe Ministries which contained minorities from the other party or persons whose party affiliation was much broader than that of their colleagues. 'Coalition' Ministries were ... the rule, not the exception. (372)

In the face of the Sacheverell scandal of 1710, the

(predominantly) Whig ministry of Godolphin had been forced to resign. As a last-ditch effort to forestall a change in ministry, the out-going Whigs (many of them important businessmen and bankers) had engineered what amounted to a government credit crisis. Robert Harley inherited a difficult situation when he came to power. The Whig ministers who were removed in 1710 were not prepared to agree to any terms of peace that they perceived to compromise the war effort of England's allies (i.e. they demanded that France must surrender); most hard-line Tories, on the other hand, supported peace at any price. To keep Whigs in office, therefore, meant jeopardising any early peace (and "Harley's overriding objective in 1710 was to make peace" [Speck, "The Examiner Examined," 142]); to bring in large numbers of Tories would weaken Harley's bargaining position with France, just when he felt he needed to negotiate from a position of strength.[5] Faced with a shortage of funds, yet forced to continue an unpopular and expensive war in Europe, Harley was left with little choice but to appoint mostly Tories to key Cabinet positions; the general elections of October 1710 confirmed a landslide Tory victory. Robert Harley thus became head of a strongly Tory ministry, despite the fact that he was, by tradition and inclination, a so-called "Shaftesburian Whig" of the "Old School,"[6] who had been determined to "compose a non-party administration comprised of the 'honestest men of both sides'" (Jonathan Swift, Political

Writer, 136). Speck writes that Harley "was not attached to any party, being neither Tory nor Whig [in the contemporary senses of those terms]" ("The Examiner Examined," 142); and Downie goes so far as to claim that "in essence, Robert Harley was anti-party" (Robert Harley and the Press, 22).

The man who became Harley's Secretary of State was someone with whom Harley had had a long political alliance, but from whom Harley differed greatly politically. The new Secretary of State was anything but anti-party; Henry St. John was a hard-line Tory. Some years later, St. John was to write concerning the 1710 change in ministry that his own and his colleagues' determination had been to "... break the body of the Whigs, to render their supports useless to them, and to fill the employments of the kingdom, down to the meanest, with Tories."[7]

It is therefore not surprising that D. H. Stevens reports that Harley "had very many potential enemies about him and very few loyal supporters" (30), despite the fact that he was surrounded by Cabinet ministers of his own choosing; and there is a certain wry humour about John Forster's comment that "the ministerial troubles were by no means from Whigs exclusively" (347).

W. A. Speck may be correct in declaring Harley to be "one of the most devious politicians of the period" ("The Examiner Examined," 142), but if Harley was devious, he was also intelligent, and keenly aware of popular currents of thought. In order for his ministry to survive, Harley

needed continued popular support. In short, he needed a way of "focusing the sentiments of the country party, the churchmen, and Tories" (Ehrenpreis, Swift II, 390); he needed a propagandist.[8]

A. L. Rowse comments that Harley "knew the value of the press and propaganda, or at least the uses to which they could be put" (65); J. M. Murry claims that no one else in Harley's position "had spent so much time in acquiring information concerning the temper of the people; and none had ever studied so carefully the art of estimating and influencing public opinion" (167); Downie declares that "Harley was, of all his contemporaries, the most aware of the power of public opinion, and how it could be manipulated by the press" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 139). And D. H. Stevens remarks that St. John, too, saw in the Examiner a valuable "bolster to the unstable Tory cause" (31). Between them, Harley and St. John created the Examiner.

Although it was Harley who most likely initiated the founding of the Examiner for the propagation of the government cause, it was St. John who was the true Tory propagandist. St. John was the writer of several of the Examiner columns immediately preceding Swift's first contribution, and it was St. John who composed "A Letter to the Examiner,"[9] wherein the Whigs are termed a "Factious Cabal," and are blamed for single-handedly provoking France into the war with England (The Whigs are held responsible

for "the real Causes which have prolong'd the War, distracted the Nation, and given France Spirit enough at last to break off the Peace" [PW III, 221; 227].).

The Examiner's editorial line had begun; it was hard-line, "high" Tory propaganda. However, for the reasons cited above, Harley did not wish his regime to be producing only hard-line Toryism as official party policy; what he needed was a propagandist who was less of a hard-line Tory than St. John), who was dedicated to the Queen, and who was set against the war; in short, Harley needed a writer who held the same "Old Whig" principles that he held. On one hand, both the public perception and certain political realities of the time were that the Harley administration was Tory (the party propaganda needed to be Tory in nature); on the other hand, personal inclination and other political realities dictated that the administration not appear too strongly, militantly Tory, either. Julia Reinemeyer writes: "That loyalty to the constitution and the Protestant Succession which had earlier made Swift a Whig, his staunch allegiance to the Church of England, and his already proven literary powers made Swift an ideal choice for the editorship of the Examiner" (70). And it was Swift who came to Harley, with his requests on behalf of the Irish clergy, in October, 1710.

4. The *Examiner*: Purpose and Effects

I Mr. Examiner's Purpose

When Swift took over as editor of the *Examiner* in the fall of 1710, the journal had several roles to fulfil. First, the *Examiner* was to disseminate party policy to the general public. The *Examiner* was created "to serve the [purposes] of Robert Harley" (Atteridge, 32), by "molding public opinion for particular political ends" (Cook, 31). The Harley administration needed to appear coherent and capable: the country was at war; the previous administration had recently been overthrown, and the Tories needed to display a strong sense of direction and leadership.

The notion of "party" was a recent enough invention that there were many readers who "could be moved" with effective party materials. That is, there were people who were not "limited to the knee-jerk party responses on all issues" (Attridge, 43; 44), in the way hard-line members of either party were limited. These were the people whom it might be possible to convince of the truth of the Tory party line.

Conveniently, the Tories had a ready market for their propaganda in the general public. Downie paints a striking picture of the strong and growing "social need for literature" of all types; literacy was spreading quickly as a social fact, and the burgeoning political presses were scrambling to keep pace with the increasing demand for

reading material. Though it sounds rather romanticised, Downie's description appears grounded in truth: he writes of "labouring men pooling their money to buy a newspaper, or going to the coffeehouses to read them before the day's work...." In fact, the growing literacy rate and the growing sense of popular political power fed off each other, until it became "virtually impossible to divorce literary and political considerations" (Robert Harley and the Press, 15).

The "educable" public is surely the audience Swift addresses, for example, at the beginning of Examiner Number 15:

> It must be avowed, that for some Years past, there have been few Things more wanted in England, than such a Paper as this ought to be; and such as I will endeavour to make it, as long as it shall be found of any Use, without entring into the Violences of either Party. Considering the many grievous Misrepresentations of Persons and Things, it is highly requisite, at this juncture, that the People throughout the Kingdom, should, if possible, be set right in their Opinions by some impartial Hand; which hath never been yet attempted.... (PW III, 13)

Swift proposes to be a non-partisan, impartial "Examiner" of English politics; a paper written by such a person as

he is, is needed, he says, to "set right" the "Opinions" of the people.

The second role of the Examiner is related to this first one: F. P. Lock claims that "The Examiner was addressed first of all to Tory members of parliament, and more generally to the country gentlemen who elected them" ("Swift and English Politics, 1701-14," 134). The Examiner was to articulate, print, and thereby valorise party policy for party "insiders," not just for those readers whom Swift calls "the People." The Examiner had to speak for and to Tory party members and sympathisers. According to Irvin Ehrenpreis, "the Tories by tradition possessed little in the way of political theory" (Swift II, 58); D. H. Stevens names the Tory party "the unformed party" (31). And W. A. Speck has called the Whigs "the more disciplined [i.e. organised] party" of the two (Stability and Strife, 148). When Harley seized power in 1710, the Tories needed to become and then to appear as a coherent, viable political force; the Examiner was the vehicle chosen to accomplish that end.

Swift's first issue of the Examiner takes up the ideals of Harley's government; it proposes a "middle ground," where both sides can meet to communicate:

> It is a Practice I have generally followed, to converse in equal Freedom with the deserving Men of both Parties; and it was never without some Contempt, that I have observed Persons wholly out

> of Employment, affect to do otherwise: I doubted whether any Man could owe so much to the side he was of, altho' he were retained by it; but without some great point of Interest, either in Possession or Prospect, I thought it was the Mark of a low and narrow Spirit. (PW III, 3)

The Examiner has begun to articulate Harley's ideals and to abandon St. John's hard-line, "Tories only" stance.

Swift does not apologise for the earlier hard-line stance affected by the paper, although he does "soften" it somewhat; he blames the rigid Toryism of earlier Examiners on fanatical Whiggism: "It is hard, that for some Weeks past, I have been forced, in my own Defense, to follow a Proceeding that I have so much condemned in others. But several of my Acquaintance, among the declining Party ..." (PW III, 3). Swift goes on in this Examiner to address issues which will become the mainstays of the paper. First, he notes approvingly that "The late Revolutions at Court" have come about because "the Queen ... [chose] to change her Ministry" (PW III, 4). Next, he comments that "It is a great Unhappiness, when in a Government constituted like ours, it should be so brought about, that the Continuance of a War must be for the Interest of vast Numbers (Civil as well as Military) who otherwise would have been as unknown as their Original" (PW III, 4). Swift traces the roots of the Tory party back to the priciples of the "Glorious

Revolution" (PW III, 5), and the troubles of the present kingdom to "caressing the Dissenters," "reproaching the Clergy," questioning the "Principles of Loyalty in the Church of England" (PW III, 6), to trusting in new-fashioned businessmen ("they proposed those pernicious Expedients of borrowing Money at vast Premiums" [PW III, 6]), rather than in the "Nobility and Gentry" (i.e. the landed gentry, the traditional seat of power and money in the kingdom) and then levelling exorbitant taxes "annually upon [the] Subjects" of the kingdom (PW III, 6-7) in order to pay those large debts, "So that Power, which, according to the old Maxim, was used to follow Land, is now gone over to Money; and the Country Gentleman is in the condition of a young Heir..." (PW III, 5). In Swift's first column, then, the issues addressed include: the problem of rigid party lines; the virtues of loyalty to the Queen (and of respecting her wise choice in the new ministry); the problem of continuing a war which only benefits a minority; the necessity of loyalty to the Church; the high taxes in the kingdom; the shift in power from landed to monied interests. The principles of the new Examiner, and by implication of the party newly in power, are virtually all touched upon: those concerns, those values, are all Harley's. The Examiner enumerates the principles of the party that it stresses is the Queen's choice; it names the problems that need to be addressed by the Tories; it cites the difficulties that it claims were created by the

outgoing Whigs. Leslie Stephen writes that "Swift had the ... task of really striking the keynote for his party. He was to put the ministerial theory into that form in which it might seem to be the inevitable utterance of strong common-sense" (88). This first Examiner does, indeed, have the ring of "strong common-sense" about it, as it begins the establishment of a party's "key-note."

Third, the Examiner was aimed at "those Tories who found in [it] an echo or mirror of themselves" (Atteridge, 43). To this end, "Swift ... offered his own character in somewhat idealised form as an accurate reflection of the country squire as he viewed himself--reasonable, staunchly patriotic, and dedicated to Queen and Church" (Cook, 99). Much of the information cited above from Swift's first Examiner would serve as an illustration of this particular audience; the stolid "Country Member" appears throughout the Examiner not only mirrored, but addressed as an important member of the Tory party. It is interesting to note that this "Country Member" even writes a letter to the Examiner on one occasion (see Number 28, PW III, 89-90).

That Country Member, like Mr. Examiner, is indeed reasonable: "I am conscious to my self, that I write this Paper with no other Intention but that of doing good..." (PW III, 91); he is staunchly patriotic: "Whoever is a true Lover of our Constitution, must needs be pleased to see what successful Endeavours are daily made to restore it in every Branch to its antient Form, from the languishing

Condition it hath long lain in, and with such deadly Symptoms" (PW III, 46); and he is dedicated to Queen and Church: "The Majority of the two Houses, and the present Ministry (if those be a Party) seem to me, in all their Proceedings, to pursue the real Interest of Church and State..." (PW III, 145); "Such an Island as ours can afford enough to support the Majesty of a Crown, the Honour of a Nobility, and the Dignity of a Magistracy: We can encourage Arts and Sciences, maintain our Bishops and Clergy; and suffer our Gentry to live in a decent hospitable manner..." (PW III, 48-9). Irvin Ehrenpreis writes: "... in these papers Swift assumed the point of view of a particular social class while founding his arguments on a show of impartiality. The landed gentry were well known to be the mainstay of the Tory party..." (Acts of Implication, 65). Swift is consistently the stolid Country Member, the Tory landowner, throughout his performance as Mr. Examiner. It was a mask brilliantly constructed, and maintained; a slippage would destroy the entire effect; but Swift never slipped.

The Examiner's fourth role included convincing a nation and a caucus that a negotiated peace was necessary--on terms favorable to both England and France. On one side, the Tories were frustrated: they had long argued for a peace at any cost (a position potentially disastrous for the English government); on the other, "It was [the Whigs'] tenacious opposition [to peace] which later led Swift to

claim that in the last four years of Anne's reign the party conflict was really between lovers of peace and lovers of war" (Stability and Strife, 149; see also Stephen, 89). Swift did his best to contribute to this perception: Swift claims repeatedly throughout the Examiner that "Power, which ... was used to follow Land, is now gone over to Money" (PW III, 5), and because that money is being used in "the Continuance of a War" (PW III, 4), "if the War continue[s] some Years longer, a Landed Man will be little better than a Farmer at a rack Rent, to the Army, and to the publick funds" (PW III, 5). In another Examiner, he claims that "nothing bore [the Whigs] up but their Credit with the Bank and other Stocks, which would be neither formidable nor necessary when the War was at an End. For these Reasons they resolved to disappoint all Overtures of a Peace, until they and their Party should be so deeply rooted as to make it impossible to shake them" (PW III, 63). Swift's ultimate argument is that peace is the "natural policy" of the Tories, and war the "natural fruit" of the Whigs (Stephen, 89).

The argument that the Whigs and the War were jointly responsible for taking power out of the hands of the landed gentry is so popular in the Examiner that Murry calls it the "leading argument" of the entire collection (197); it was certainly an important aspect of the Examiner's role. Swift's job, then, in his capacity of anti-war propagandist was to defend the ministry both against Whig critics who

wished to continue the war, and against Tory critics who wanted the war ended much more quickly than official negotiations dictated it could be, and at the same time to "hold together ... all those who could be persuaded to support the Ministry" (Herbert Davis, "Introduction" to PW VI, xiii). Swift's obsession with the war continued until after peace negotiations had already begun in earnest, and in secret, between England and France, and after the Examiner had served its purpose; in the "Conduct of the Allies..." (1711), Swift would revive an old Examiner argument: "I lay it down for a Maxim, that no Reasonable Person, whether Whig or Tory (since it is necessary to use those foolish terms) can be of opinion for continuing the War, upon the foot it now is, unless he be a Gainer by it ..." (PW VI, 5); finally, in the Journal to Stella, 3 April, 1713, Swift would write with satisfaction and relief: "the great Work is in effect done, and I believe it will appear a most excellent Peace for Europe, particularly for Engld [sic]."

The Examiner's fifth role was to attract the attention of the opposition papers away from the government and towards itself. Julia Reinemeyer writes: "the nobility of his condescension, the cordiality of his addresses, the kindly concern he displays for the 'declining party' are obviously calculated to drive the Whigs and their 'worthless tribe of scribblers' into a state of frenzy.... Swift realised that, if he could divert the Whig journals

from ... embarrassing topics and focus their attention upon the Examiner instead, he would be doing the ministry a valuable service. Consequently, he deliberately set out to harass and annoy his Grub Street rivals" (109; 127). Reinemeyer is correct; the harassment of rival journalists is a significant element in the Examiner. In Number 15, for example, Swift discounts "those who have hitherto undertaken" "such a Paper as this ought to be" as "upon every Account the least qualified of all Human-kind for such a Work"; opposition journalists are "stupid illiterate Scribblers" (PW III, 13). In Number 28, he muses: "I have often wondered how it hath come to pass, that these industrious People, after poring so constantly upon the Examiner, a Paper writ with plain Sense, and in a tolerable Style; have made so little Improvement" (PW III, 87). In Number 41: "I have been amazed at the flaming Licentiousness of several Weekly Papers, which for some months past, have been chiefly employed in barefaced Scurrilities against those who are in the greatest Trust and Favour with the Queen..." (PW III, 153). In Number 18: "A certain starveling Author who worked under the late Administration, told me with a heavy Heart, above a Month ago, That he and some others of his Brethren, had secretly offered their services dog-cheap to the present Ministry; but were all refused.... If I have room at the Bottom of this Paper, I will transcribe a Petition to the present Ministry, sent me by one of these Authors, in Behalf of

himself and fourscore of his Brethren" (PW III, 30-1).

II Mr. Examiner's Effects

Atteridge writes that "The Examiner is rarely good art, but it is almost invariably effective propaganda. There was a job to be done, and Swift did it..." (269). The proof of a successful propaganda strategy is in its results: and Swift's results are impressive. First, in its role as propaganda to the educable, non-partisan masses, the Examiner's record was very good. K. B. Smellie, for instance, enthuses about the way "the ideas of a Swift, a Steele, and an Addison" were discussed avidly "in the coffee-houses of London" (4). And Swift reports to Stella (Journal to Stella, 14 May 1711): "Dr. Freind ... pulled out a two-penny pamphlet just published, called, The State of Wit, giving a character of all the papers that have come out of late. The author seems to be a Whig, yet he speaks very highly of a paper called the Examiner...."

Second, the Examiner's role in crystallising Tory party policy can be measured by the degree to which biographers and critics of Swift identify the Examiner's editorial policy with official Tory positions. Samuel Johnson, for instance, writes: "In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the stream of popularity against the Whigs, and must be confessed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the English nation" (50). One might revise Dr. Johnson's grudging respect to read that he "articulated for a time ...." The difference is significant.

The stronger argument is that the Tories themselves trusted Swift. One may judge Swift's success by his employments in the Harley regime: when it first came into power, and was under a great deal of political and ideological pressure, he was the Tory spokesman; according to contemporary opinion, the Examiner was "the most influential and effective [journal] of its kind" (cited by Attridge, 129). After the Examiner had outlived its usefulness, it was Swift who was chosen to write the influential and important "The Conduct of the Allies ...," which argued eloquently for the peace the Examiner had so long advocated.

Third, there is considerable evidence that the Examiner was perused eagerly not only in the coffee-houses of London, but also in the areas of England dominated by the "Rural Country Squires" he imitated so well. J. E. Mercer, for instance, records the wide distribution and use of the Examiner in rural prebends: "... copies of the Examiner were treasured by the clergy and used in their parishes ..." (129), and Temple Scott, in his own edition of Swift's Prose Works, quotes Churton Collins' claim that the Examiner "became a voice of power in every town and every hamlet throughout England" (Vol. IX, 69).

Fourth, the strongest evidence for the success of the Examiner's anti-war stance is that the war ended, with popular support, less than two years after the appearance of Swift's columns. Ricardo Quintana notes: "The Examiner

had been preparatory propaganda; through its columns the nation had been turned towards peace" (The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift, 187). Again, of course, the fact that Swift was chosen to write "The Conduct of the Allies..." is significant.

The evidence that Swift's fifth strategy was working is plentiful: "For my own particular, those little barking Pens which have so constantly pursued me, I take to be of no further Consequence to what I have writ, than the scoffing Slaves of old, placed behind the Chariot, to put the General in Mind of his Mortality... (PW III, 171); Swift also refers to the Medley's (a paper "chiefly devoted to rebutting the Examiner" [Journal to Stella, 254, n. 30]) "indefatiguable, incessant Railings against me" (PW III, 153). These are remarks, of course, designed to provoke the rival papers even more than the Examiner's original scandals had. Swift confesses to having created enemies for himself; he writes, in "Memoirs Relating to that Change which Happened in the Queen's Ministry": "the determination was, that I should continue it, which I did accordingly for about eight months. But, my stile being soon discovered, and having contracted a great number of enemies, I let it fall into other hands, who held it up in some manner till her Majesty's death" (PW VIII, 124). And on 9 February 1711, he writes to Stella about the scandal the Examiner was creating: "Mr. Prior was like to be insulted in the street for being supposed the author of it; but one of the

last papers cleared him."

Finally, the Examiner himself, of course, is well pleased with what he accomplished during his reign as "the first lord of English journalists" (Reinemeyer, 1): "And now I conceive the main Design I had in writing these Papers, is fully executed. A great Majority of the Nation is at Length thoroughly convinced, that the Queen proceeded with the highest Wisdom, in changing her Ministry and Parliament. That, under a former Administration, the greatest Abuses of all Kinds were committed; and the most dangerous Attempts against the Constitution for some Time intended. The whole Kingdom finds the present Persons in Power, directly and openly pursuing the true Service of their Queen and Country; and to be such whom their most bitter Enemies cannot tax with Bribery, Covetousness, Ambition, Pride, Insolence, or any pernicious Principles in Religion or Government" (PW III, 171).

5. From Whig to Tory: Swift's "Switch"

W. A. Speck writes that "Swift began Anne's reign as a Whig and ended it as a Tory.... This change is the key to Swift's politics. If we could explain it we would solve the knottiest problem of his political allegiance, for he never changed again" ("From Principles to Practice," 69). The change in Swift's political affiliation took place in the time period between 2 September, when he arrived in London, and 2 November, the date of his first column for the Examiner. That time period is covered in some detail in the Journal to Stella. It recounts Swift's changing perspective on the events that Speck claims are the "key" to understanding him and his politics; I intend, therefore, to quote extensively from this fascinating document, and then to provide some commentary. The quotations are more extensive than I would prefer, but over eighty pages of the Journal to Stella are devoted to Swift's negotiations and to his "swing" in allegiance.

Swift arrived in London on 2 September 1710, intent on renewing his negotiations with the English government for the remittance of the First Fruits on behalf of the Irish Church. On an earlier visit, Swift had written to Archbishop King that "I never in my life saw or heard such divisions and complications of parties as there have been for some time: you sometimes see the extremes of Whig and Tory driving on the same thing..." (12 February 1708: Corres. I, 70); this visit was worse.

The Whig party was in trouble: there were rumours of an upcoming general election, and indications were that the Tories had managed to turn Dr. Sacheverell into a martyr, thus into a popular hero, and therefore the population against the Whigs. "Every day we expect changes, and the Parliament to be dissolved....The rabble here are much more inquisitive in politicks, than in Ireland....I never saw so great a ferment among all sorts of people" (Journal to Stella, 11 September, 1710). Many leading Whigs had already been dismissed from key government positions;[1] Robert Harley had been asked to form the next government, and Tories were sure to make up the bulk of appointments to key ministerial positions. Those Tory choices most likely would be reinforced by the general populace if and when elections were called.

Swift immediately set about visiting his London friends and acquaintances, most of whom were Whig; he writes that though he has "not yet gone half my circle," "The Whigs [are] ravished to see me, and would lay hold on me as a twig while they are drowning, and the great men making me their clumsy apologies, etc.";[2] the exception was Godolphin, however, who "received me with a great deal of coldness," which "has enraged me so, I am almost vowing revenge" (Journal to Stella, 9 September 1710). The next day, Swift writes again of visiting friends, again all of them Whigs: "I sat till ten in the evening with Addison and Steele: Steele will certainly lose his Gazetteer's place,

all the world detesting his engaging in parties. At ten I went to the Coffee-house,[3] hoping to find lord Radnor, whom I had not seen. He was there; for an hour and a half we talked treason heartily against the Whigs, their baseness and ingratitude. And I am come home rolling resentments in my mind, and framing schemes of revenge..." (Journal to Stella, 1Ø September 171Ø). On 12 September, Swift writes that he has seen Lord Somers,[4] and has been "advised not to meddle in the affair of the First-Fruits, till this hurry is a little over, which still depends, and we are all in the dark. [Lord Somers] told me he expects every day to be out, and has done so these two months. I protest upon my life, I am heartily weary of this town, and wish I had never stirred" (Journal to Stella, 12 September 171Ø).

By 2Ø September, Swift writes: "Today ... I heard the report confirmed of removals; my lord-president Somers; the duke of Devonshire, lord-steward; and Mr. Boyle, secretary of state, are all turned out today.... We are astonished why the Parliament is not yet dissolved.... We shall have a strange Winter here between the struggles of a cunning provoked discarded party, and the triumphs of one in power; of both which I shall be an indifferent spectator, and return very peaceably to Ireland, when I have done my part in the affair I am trusted with, whether it succeeds or no." On 21 September: "This night the Parliament is dissolved.... This is from St. James's Coffee-house." On 22 September: "Things are in such a combustion here, that I am

advised not to meddle yet in the affair I am upon, which concerns the clergy of a whole kingdom...." By 26 September 1710, Swift confesses in a letter to Dean Stearne, "I am weary of the caresses of great men out of place" (Corres. I, 178).

29 September brings Swift's first mention of Harley in the Journal to Stella;[5] and "Mr. Harley" is soon appearing regularly: 30 September: "I dined with Stratford to-day, but am not to see Mr. Harley till Wednesday.... 'Tis good to see what a lamentable confession the Whigs all make me of my ill usage; but I mind them not. I am already represented to Harley as a discontented person, that was used ill for not being Whig enough; and I hope for good usage from him. The Tories dryly tell me, I may make my fortune, if I please; but I do not understand them, or rather, I do understand them."

On 2 October, Swift writes that "Lord Halifax began a health [i.e. a toast] to me today; it was the Resurrection of the Whigs, which I refused unless he would add their Reformation too: and I told him he was the only Whig in England I loved, or had any good opinion of"; 4 October: "... to-day I was brought privately to Mr. Harley, who received me with the greatest respect and kindness imaginable: he has apointed me an hour on Saturday at four, afternoon, when I will open my business to him...."

Swift records that on 6 October, "... now I am come home, and must copy out some papers I intend for Mr. Harley

.... We now hear daily of elections; and, in a list I saw yesterday of about twenty, there are seven or eight more Tories than in the last Parliament; so that I believe they need not fear a majority.... But I have been told, that Mr. Harley himself would not let the Tories be too numerous, for fear they should be insolent, and kick against him; and for that reason they have kept several Whigs in employments ...." 7 October sees Harley and Swift sitting "two hours drinking as good wine as you do; and two hours more he and I alone; where he heard me tell my business; entered into it with all kindness; askt for my powers, and read them; and read likewise a memorial I had drawn up, and put it in his pocket to show the queen; told me the measures he would take; and, in short, said every thing I could wish: told me he must bring Mr. St. John (secretary of state) and me acquainted; and spoke so many things of personal kindness and esteem for me, that I am inclined half to believe what some friends have told me, That he would do every thing to bring me over.... After four hours being with him, [he] set me down at St. James's Coffee-house, in a hackney coach. All this is odd and comical, if you consider him and me. He knew my Christian name very well.... They may talk of the you know what;[6] but gad if it had not been for that, I should never have been able to get the access I have had; and if that helps me to succeed, then that same thing will be serviceable to the church." 1Ø October: "I am in hopes it [the First Fruits] will be done ... for he loves the

church: this is a popular thing, and he would not have a governor share in it; and, besides, I am told by all hands, he has a mind to gain me over." 12 October: "We are in a very dull state, only enquiring every day after new elections, where the Tories carry it among the new members six to one." 13 October: "[Lord Halifax] is a Whig, and I'll put him upon some of my cast Whigs; for I have done with them, and they have, I hope, done with this kingdom for our time." 13 October also brought an "extraordinary" letter from Matthew Dudley, a friend of Swift, and a Whig: "Is the Devil in you? Oct. 13, 1710." 14 October: "I suppose I have said enough in this and a former letter how I stand with [the] new people; ten times better than ever I did with the old; forty times more caressed. I am to dine to-morrow at Mr. Harley's; and if he continues as he has begun, no man has been ever better treated by another." 15 October: "... the queen ... has consented to give the First-Fruits and the Twentieth parts, and will, we hope, declare it tomorrow in the cabinet. But I beg you to tell it to no person alive; for so I am ordered, till in publick: and I hope to get something of greater value."[7] 20 October: "Do they know any thing in Ireland of my greatness among the Tories? Every body reproaches me of it here; but I value them not."

21 October: "Pray say nothing of the First-Fruits being granted, unless I give leave at the bottom of this. I believe never any thing was compassed so soon, and purely

done by my personal credit with Mr. Harley, who is so excessively obliging, that I know not what to make of it, unless to show the rascals of the other party that they used a man unworthily, who had deserved better." 22 October: "Well, I dined with Sir Matthew Dudley, and in the evening went to sit with Mr. Addison ... but found Party had so possessed him, that he talked as if he suspected me, and would not fall in with anything I said.... When shall I grow wise? I endeavour to act in the most exact points of honour and conscience, and my nearest friends will not understand it so." 29 October: "... and now [I] am come home to write some business." 30 October: "I came home early, and must go write." 1 November: "I sat up the night before my giddiness pretty late [i.e. he was up late the evening of 30 October], and writ very much"; Swift's first Examiner appeared on 2 November. 3 November: "I have now leave to write to the primate and archbishop of Dublin, that the queen has granted the First-Fruits...."[8]

Although the length of Swift's narrative of the negotiations that took place in the two months before he became Mr. Examiner is protracted, it is important to grasp the full range of what was happening during that time period. There are at least two important features of Swift's narrative (for it is a narrative, and with a double plot) that need to be stressed. First is the nature of the negotiations from Swift's perspective: the fight to win the First Fruits is paralleled by Swift's "swing" in politics.

As he becomes more optimistic about the First Fruits, he becomes more and more convinced of the justness of the Tory cause. Second, from the perspective of the Tory ministry, as Swift becomes more and more Tory, more and more hope is given with regard to the First Fruits; he is rewarded for an increasing Toryism.

There is an important progression in the negotiations. First of all, Swift becomes increasingly Tory: in early September, Swift is "rolling resentments" and "framing schemes of revenge"; in late September, he is intrigued by the fact that he could "make [his] fortune" with the Tories; by the beginning of October, he is refusing to drink to the Whigs; then he is "inclined half to believe ... that [Harley] would do every thing to bring me over"; by the middle of October, Swift snarls,"I have done with them [the Whigs]." At the same time, the affair of the First Fruits progresses nicely: at the beginning of September, Swift has been advised "not to meddle in the affair of the First-Fruits"; by the end of September, he has again been told "not to meddle," despite the fact that the inevitable political reality is that the Whigs are on their way out, and the "affair ... concerns the clergy of a whole kingdom"; a third of the way through October, Swift is "in hopes it will be done"; halfway through October, the "queen ... has consented"; on the third of November, Swift is free to tell the Irish clergy that the First Fruits concessions have been passed.

There are certain significant dates involved with Swift's "conversion"; they are dates that indicate that the Tories were interested in wooing Swift as a writer from the first. On the 6th October, Swift is busy in the evening copying out papers that he intends to show to Harley in their meeting the next day; on the 7th, after the meeting, Swift speculates that the Tories would like to "bring [him] over." On the 13th October, Swift declares that "I have done with them," and receives Dudley's cryptic letter, "Is the Devil in you?" Given that Dudley was a Whig, the letter can easily be interpreted as being alarmed that Swift has become a Tory; there is no other obvious interpretation of the letter. If in fact Swift had decided on or about the 13th to declare for the Whigs, the fact that Swift's announcement to Stella that "the queen has consented" comes on the 15th is highly significant. Swift's first Examiner appeared on 2 November; on 3 November, he got permission to tell the Irish clergy that his mission had finally been a success. In his "Memoirs Relating to that Change ..." Swift claims that Harley's interest in him had always been grounded on some of Swift's earlier writings: they wanted "some good pen." Consistently, Swift's large breakthroughs in his party "conversions" match within a day or two the significant triumphs in his negotiations.

W. A. Speck is not the only critic who has had a fascination for Swift's change in politics. There have been many theories devoted to the switch; generally, they fall

into one of a limited number of categories.

The first is an approach that stresses Swift's advantages in becoming the main propagandist for the Tory regime. F. P. Lock writes that "Swift gained from his association with the Oxford ministry his deanery, with its ample income and dignity; a literary reputation as a brilliant pamphleteer; and the experience of living close to the centre of political power and influence" (148). This approach in general stresses Swift's interest in preferment and tends to suggest that his personal beliefs were sacrificed in the name of preferment. D. H. Stevens is perhaps the most emphatic in this regard; he writes: "Of all the writers then in England, he was most keenly alive to the possibilities of his age, and probably no one was more ready to ignore political beliefs for the sake of immediate advantage ... [Swift] sold himself to the highest bidder" (36-7). It is true that preferment was important to Swift; J. H. Bernard, in fact, notes Swift's "... constant talk of preferment, in the Church as well as in the State, [as] a feature of Swift's correspondence..." (xxxv). It is true that preferment was important to Swift; far from the questionable status it holds today, preferment was a respectable (in some cases the only) means of securing promotion: one had to be noticed by the great and powerful. However, there are certain problems with the stance that D. H. Stevens adopts. First, although Swift remarks that "The Tories ... tell me, that I may make my fortune, if I

please..." (Journal to Stella, 30 September, 1710), he also indignantly refused payment for the Examiner when Harley offered him money. If, indeed, Swift undertook the Examiner purely as a vehicle towards preferment, he chose badly; even Stevens admits that Swift was slighted by the administration that he had worked for (37-8). Of more interest, however, is a remark by Swift in the Journal to Stella: "I endeavour to act in the most exact points of honour and conscience, and my nearest friends will not understand it so" (22 October, 1710).

A second approach to Swift's change in party is articulated most clearly by Thomas Sheridan: "... he had long formed in his head some great plan for promoting the publick welfare, in regard to which all considerations of self, weighed with him but as the dust upon the balance" (112-13). J. E. Mercer remarks: "... the cause itself was so just, his debt of gratitude to Harley so great, and his own desire for revenge so burning that he was convinced that the ends justified the means" 169). And Ricardo Quintana writes: "Swift's partisanship was real, it was intense and bitter, it was to lead him into more than one ungenerous act, it certainly involved an element of passionate self-deception. Yet despite all this, Swift's sincerity in maintaining as he always did that he spoke for the nation is beyond doubt" (Swift: An Introduction, 99). One major objection to the notion that Swift had no serious thoughts of preferment on his mind when he undertook the

Examiner is the bitterness of his rhetoric in letters he wrote in later life. For instance, the letter he wrote to Archbishop King on 18 May, 1727 enumerates many of the services Swift performed for Archbishop King and the church, but also complains that "your Grace hath thought fit to take every opportunity of giving me all sorts of uneasiness, without ever giving me, in my whole life, one single mark of your favour, beyond common civilities.... I thought, and have been told, that I deserved better from that Church and that kingdom: I am sure I do from your Grace" (Corres. III, 210). On 21 March, 1730, Swift writes to Bolingbroke (St. John): "I wonder you are not ashamed to let me pine away in this kingdom..." (Corres. III, 383). These are not the words of a man who served his church and country with no thought of reward.

The third motivating factor behind Swift's Tory pamphleteering is simple revenge: "Much of the peculiar satisfaction he derived from his brilliant work for the Tories was that it showed the Whig grandees what a mighty mistake they had made in not treating him as an equal" (Murry, 175). There are many references to indicate that revenge was, indeed, a factor in Swift's defection; the Journal to Stella abounds with them. However, Swift's vengefulness would have to be quite selective for this motivation to be paramount: he never vowed revenge upon Harley and St. John, though his bitter letters to them indicate he thought they had done little enough for him.

A fourth approach to the conundrum of Swift's Tory pamphlets originates with Irvin Ehrenpreis: "If I ... refuse to classify Swift among the Whigs during those years, my reason is that he showed no sympathy with the tenets peculiar to their cluster of factions and made no gesture to support them" (Swift II, 252). In other words, Ehrenpreis wishes to make Swift a consistent Tory all along; the trouble with this approach is that it necessitates ignoring much pertinent information. For instance, Swift's statement in "Memoirs Relating to the Change Which Happened in the Queen's Ministry": "It was then [1702] that I first began to trouble myself with the difference between the principles of Whig and Tory; ... I found myself to be what they called a Whig in politics; ... But, as to religion, I confessed myself to be an High-Churchman..." (PW VIII, 120). Ehrenpreis also must ignore the soul-searching that went on throughout the Journal to Stella as Swift changed parties.

The truth, I think, is not so much a compromise among those positions as a position that incorporates elements of all of them, with two added ingredients. It is, therefore, true that Swift longed for promotion ("a bishopry, or an English deanery at the very least" [Robert Harley and the Press, 152]), but also true that he truly believed that he had acted with honour throughout (see the Journal to Stella); Swift longed for revenge on the Whigs whom, he thought, had treated him badly (again, see the Journal to

Stella), though he felt, too, that he had switched party allegiances out of necessity.

The missing ingredients in the puzzle are personal friendship and the facts of history. The friendship was with both Harley and St. John; it "held them together long after the events of those years were merely a faint memory" (Robert Harley and the Press, 152). Swift went on trying to reconcile Harley and St. John after their ideological split; in a letter to Pope dated 10 January, 1721, Swift writes that "I only wish my endeavours had succeeded better in the great point I had at heart, which was that of reconciling the Ministers to each other" (Corres. II, 369). History, as well, plays a large part in the definitions of Whig and Tory; essentially, Swift was a Whig of the "Old School," like Harley, and like his first mentor, Sir William Temple. Swift was a strong believer in the monarchy, with the restrictions and modifications imposed by the Revolution (thus he can call himself a Whig in politics); his other article of faith is his profound reverence for the Church, and the necessity of preserving the church against "Dissenters" of all kinds (thus, he was a Tory in religion). Both of these essential elements were part of the belief structure of the "Old," "Shaftesburian" Whigs. Swift's politics are not composed of finding the mean between two extremes, but of choosing a third system that avoided extremes, as part of its structure. Thus, in "The Sentiments of a Church of England Man," Swift

expresses his beliefs concerning religion and politics, and they are substantially the same beliefs as he would express consistently in the Examiner, two years later: "I should think that, in order to preserve the Constitution entire in Church and State; whoever hath a true Value for both, would be sure to avoid the Extreams of Whig for the Sake of the former, and the Extreams of Tory on Account of the latter" (PW II, 25).

6. The Examiner at Work: Attacking Marlborough

The task Swift set for himself, and that was set for him, when he took over the editorship of the Examiner was to convince the nation that "the Queen proceeded with the highest Wisdom, in changing her Ministry and Parliament" (PW III, 171). The Examiner had begun its task with the general assertion that the war was a profit-making venture on the part of the Whigs (PW III, 4) that was destructive to the kingdom as a whole. The Whigs, therefore, deserved to lose power, and the war which they supported for selfish reasons needed to be ended. It was an argument that Swift would use throughout the Examiner.

Downie writes that "Symbolism is crucial to successful propaganda" (Robert Harley and the Press, 193). According to the symbolic world created by the Examiner, the Tories were peace-loving; they were loyal to the church and crown; they were interested only in true prosperity, solidly based on the ownership of land. The Whigs, on the other hand, were war-mongers; their loyalty to the church was questionable, given their alliance with the Dissenters; they were suspected of trying to unduly influence and effectively control the crown; their wealth was based on false values: the possession of money and stocks, not land. The Whigs, in short, were avaricious; they were interested in prolonging the war because the war provided them with the easiest route to profit. The Tories represented all right-minded Englishmen; the Whigs, an evil "faction."

The most obvious Whig proponent of the war, the person who had built a reputation based on his successes in the war, the Whig with the most to gain and the most to lose from the war was General Marlborough. If the Tories were the symbol of peace, and the Whigs the symbol of the war, the symbol of the Whigs, in turn, was Marlborough. If the war were to be discredited, the single most obvious target for the Examiner was the General himself.

In October 1709, Marlborough had made what Green calls "the biggest miscalculation of his career" (213): knowing that he would lose his commission if the Whigs lost power, Marlborough had tried to cover for himself by requesting that he be made a general for life. "English feeling was predominantly anti-military, and a standing army [such an organisation was assumed in having a general for life] was regarded as a perpetual threat to liberty. Nothing had made Marlborough more distrusted than his demand that he should be created Captain General for life. Almost as popular with the country gentlemen as the argument against waste and corruption was that against the maintenance of a standing army" (Marshall, 46-7).

Though Marlborough's scandalous request had created a wave of anti-Marlborough sentiment with it, "popular animosity against Marlborough was beginning to wane by November 1710 as the Whigs endeavoured to persuade people that it was the greatest ingratitude to curb the Captain-General's authority after the brilliant victories which he

had won for the allied cause. Swift revived it again..." ("The Examiner Examined," 141).

Swift's first concentrated assault on Marlborough came on 23 November 1710, with Examiner Number 16.

Examiner Number 16 is composed of nine paragraphs. Their basic arguments can be summarised quickly in this manner: (1) the establishment of a point of view, and the initial addressing of the problem; (2) inquiries are made into the exact nature of the attacks upon Marlborough; (3) the comment is made, almost as an aside, that one should venerate the queen, and that there will be little veneration left over for generals if one values the queen as one ought; (4) the link is made between the deposed Whigs and Marlborough; (5) the proposal is made to examine British ingratitude; (6) a list is made of Marlborough's rewards; (7) a list is made of the customary rewards of Roman generals; (8) note is taken that Roman generals usually contributed any gold and silver they took as spoils to the public coffers; (9) the conclusion is drawn that the British at their worst are not so bad as the Romans at their best. I propose to deal with each paragraph in turn.

First, Swift establishes the point of view from which the problem will be examined. Here, Swift is the typical Examiner: he is reasonable ("I have considered with a great deal of Application..."); he is educated ("[I have] made several Enquiries..."); he is humble ("...among those Persons who I thought were best able to inform me..."); he

is courteous ("if I deliver my sentiments with some freedom, I hope it will be forgiven..."); he is sensitive ("I [will] accompany [my remarks] with that Tenderness which so nice a point requires"). Martin Price claims that Swift "claims simply to uncover truth rather than to awaken passions ... [by] skeptically testing assertions by empirical evidence, soberly applying reasonable principles to the case in question" (32); the Examiner who is sketched in this first paragraph is well suited to his task.

Second, the Examiner proposes to enquire into the exact nature of the attacks upon Marlborough. This is done using a series of rhetorical questions. First, however, Swift blames the (Whig) press ("the common Clamour of Tongues and Pens") for making this particular column necessary; the opposition press believes that Marlborough has not been treated fairly by the Examiner; reasonable man that he is, Swift decides to reply. Next, he overstates the injury that has been done to Marlborough: he mentions "the Baseness, the Inconstancy and Ingratitude of the whole Kingdom," and overstates Marlborough's performance: "the most eminent Services that ever were performed by a Subject to his Country; not to be equalled in History," with the aside that that praise does injury to "Alexander and Caesar, who never did us the least Injury." Swift uses superlatives here to good effect: the exaggeration that is stated explicitly on the part of Marlborough's services (he has been compared favorably to two of the greatest generals

in history) implies that there has been an exaggeration in the placing of blame on those who have neglected to reward Marlborough. Swift turns next to a long tradition of treating generals unfairly: the Greeks and Romans "ungratefully dealt with I know not how many of their most deserving Generals." Tongue firmly in cheek, Swift notes that "If a Stranger should hear these furious Out-cries of Ingratitude against our General, without knowing the Particulars, he would be apt to enquire where was his Tomb, or whether he were allowed Christian Burial? Not doubting but what we had put him to some ignominious Death. Or, hath he been tried for his Life, and very narrowly escaped?"

The main thrust of this paragraph, however, is in the series of rhetorical questions levelled by a "Stranger" concerning British ingratitude towards the person who has been represented as the greatest general of all time, anywhere. The questions concern being tried for "crimes and misdemeanours" (in fact, Marlborough was the most celebrated and decorated general of his time); the Prince seizing his estate (in fact, he had been granted an estate --Blenheim); a Rabble "hooting" him (in fact, he was treated with great public respect); and so on. If the crime of ingratitude does not lie in any of the areas already covered, then, asks Swift, where is the ingratitude of which England has been accused? "Why, it is plain and clear; for while he is commanding abroad, the Queen dissolveth her Parliament, and changeth her Ministry at

home: In which universal Calamity, no less than two Persons allied by marriage to the General, have lost their Places." Here, Swift "pretends to praise what he means to condemn [and] he pretends to condemn what he means to praise" (Bullitt, 51). The loss of two positions at court is called a "universal Calamity," when such a loss--of positions of questionable validity--is obviously not a "calamity" at all; the questions have been answered for us in the negative, each of them ~~with~~ an implied comment on contemporary politics, and the actual cause of the charges of ingratitude has been labelled as a positive step. The nation's "ingratitude" is looking less like ingratitude all the time.

Swift finishes this paragraph with an aside that wonders "Whence came this wonderful Sympathy between the Civil and Military Powers?" and muses about whether the troops will refuse to fight, unless provided with their own government.

Third, Swift speculates about whether the reason for Marlborough's lack of popularity could have to do with a lack of wisdom, or perhaps have something to do with his appearance: "The Possession of some one Quality, or a Defect in some other, will extremely damp the Peoples Favour, as well as the Love of the Soldiers." Swift continues: "Besides, this is not an age to produce Favourites of the People, while we live under a Queen who engrosseth all our Love, and all our Veneration.... [A]

great General or Minister, to acquire any Degree of subordinate Affection from the Publick, must be by all Marks of the most entire Submission and Respect to her sacred Person and Commands; otherwise, no pretence of great Services, either in the Field or the Cabinet, will be able to skreen them from universal Hatred." The implication of this paragraph is that, first, any veneration that Marlborough might acquire would be a kind of surface devotion; second, the major reason for the general populace to not venerate Marlborough is his lack of respect for the Queen--a politically "hot" topic, and a decisive dividing point between Whig and Tory; Tories thought of themselves, and are consistently represented in the Examiner, as the party most devoted to the throne. Swift offers his explanation neutrally; the strategy is one pointed out by Bullitt as an important Swiftian ploy: he writes that an "atmosphere of detachment and objectivity ... is created by Swift's care in avoiding any personal assessment of his own" (59). In other words, while Swift is supplying the possible hypotheses for the reasons for Marlborough's supposed lack of popularity, and thereby delimiting the possibilities of "truth," he is claiming that the truth speaks for itself.

Fourth, the deposed Whigs are allied very closely with Marlborough: "... and the Ingratitude of the Nation lieth in the People's joining as one Man, to wish, that such a Ministry should be changed. Is it not at the same Time

notorious to the whole Kingdom, that nothing but a tender Regard to the General, was able to preserve the Ministry so long, until neither God nor Man could suffer their Continuance?" This is a reverse kind of praise: in a way, Marlborough is being blamed for the continuance so long of a ministry that had grown insufferable. The implication, too, is that because the Whig ministry has been overthrown, by an entire nation, "acting as one man," Marlborough himself is due to be overthrown.

One thing that is clear in the foregoing paragraph is that the Examiner aligns himself very closely with the nation which has acted "as one man." He continues that alliance in the fifth paragraph by inviting his readers to continue the examination of Marlborough with him: he will devote his time to seeing whether or not good services have been inadequately rewarded in the kingdom, and thereby determine "whether upon that Article, either Prince or People have been guilty of Ingratitude?"

The sixth paragraph begins the examination proposed in the fifth: though Swift will "say nothing of the Title of Duke, or the Garter, which the Queen bestowed in the beginning of her reign," he is very interested in the other rewards that Marlborough has managed to garner in his service of the crown. The Examiner reckons that Marlborough has made off with something more than half a million pounds, and "all this is but a Trifle, in comparison of what is untold." This half-million pounds is labelled

"British ingratitude."

Swift has swept his readers along to this point by pretending to be reasonable and detached, by giving the impression that he is trying, in a detached, objective way, to discover the causes of a grave injustice that has been done to the greatest general in history. A vital part of satire, however, is that it be recognisable as satire: Swift therefore must inject an element into his essay that labels it as the scathing satire of Marlborough that it is. It is absurd to itemise the rewards that Marlborough has garnered, to add them up and then conclude that he has made over half a million pounds in "ungratefulness." Marlborough has suddenly become one of the Whig wretches who is benefitting significantly from the war--materially and in terms of his fame as a fine soldier.

To drive the point further home, in the seventh paragraph Swift proceeds to itemise the honours and rewards bestowed on a Greek or a Roman general, who had "entirely subdued his Enemies," or who had returned "from the most glorious Expedition; conquered some great Kingdom; brought the King himself, his Family and Nobles to adorn the Triumph in Chains; and made the Kingdom either a Roman Province, or at best, a poor depending State, in humble Alliance to that Empire." Despite Marlborough's always competent, and sometimes brilliant, campaign in Europe, he can claim no new kingdoms for England; he cannot claim to have "entirely subdued his enemies." The comparison is

made: Marlborough, far from conquering with the overwhelming force of the Romans, is involved with a very unpopular war that has lasted for many years. Roman gratitude for the exploits of their generals adds up to 994 pounds, 11 shillings, 10 pence. The bills of reckoning are drawn up on the page: British ingratitude, 540,000 pounds; Roman gratitude, 994.11.10. This following on the heels of a comparison of the actual exploits of the various generals involved casts large aspersions on Marlborough: he has become greedy, grasping, and incompetent to boot.

Swift's eighth paragraph drives home his point mercilessly: "... all valuable Prizes taken in the War, were openly exposed in the Triumph; and then in the Capital for the Publick Service."

Martin Price comments: "In irony we hear two voices, one saying what its limited character requires, the other what a different awareness must add or oppose. The quality of the ironic effect will be determined by the reliability of these two voices" (57). One of Swift's voices in this piece has maintained the strictly detached and reasonable facade that has characterised him all along: the other voice is submerged. We are aware that it is there; indeed, it is a necessary part of the writing. This second voice is the one that articulates the absurdities, that is willing to ignore historical and social realities to draw up a list of the rewards given to generals English and Roman, and then render them on an account sheet.

In the ninth and final paragraph, Swift quotes a maxim to make his point: "We find many ungrateful Persons in the World, but we make more, by setting too high a Rate upon our Pretensions, and undervaluing the Rewards we receive." The column thus becomes a lesson in greed and humility. Maxims are common in Swift's writing: Bullitt points out that "The analytic employment of a maxim as an accepted general standard against which some particular is contrasted is close to the core of the ideal--reality relationship underlying so much of Swift's satire" (110). Swift's implied ideal here is actually outlined at the beginning of the column: the ideal is the perfect, deserving, virtuous general "not to be equalled in History"; the reality is the avaricious Marlborough who will be attacked so mercilessly within a few weeks in the character of Crassus (in Examiner Number 27, 8 February, 1711).

Thus far, Swift's column is, in Green's estimation, "skilfully done," and "at least founded in fact." The Marlborough exploits were public property; his mansions and wealth were readily observable. However, the column does not end there; the last few sentences are examples of what has prompted Atteridge to write that one of the reasons for the Examiner's phenomenal success is that "he was so scandalously slanderous that he was able to provide new delights to a reading public long since jaded by slanderous propaganda" (237). The final few sentences are directed at

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. In effect, it called into question Sarah's honesty in managing the household affairs of Anne, despite the scrupulous (and well-known) honesty of Sarah (see Green, 235).

In this particular Examiner, Swift employs most of the techniques he used throughout the period he wrote the paper: in the guise of a reasonable man, Swift systematically attacks his target using the weapons available to him: irony, satire, reversals of meaning, scandal. He stays relentlessly on target, with his audience fixed in mind. The column is a brilliant, savage satire. It has a target in Marlborough; it has an audience in the delighted Tory landowners who, though scandalised, read it and believed.

Conclusion

The picture of Swift that emerges from this thesis is composed of contrasts and ambivalences.

First, Swift was born in obscurity, and felt that he had to live his life in pursuit of the power he had been deprived of at birth. At least partly because of the power and recognition it entailed, Swift became a member of the Irish Church. He rose through the ranks of the Church to the point where he was asked to represent the Church before the Queen, in its petition to have the "First Fruits" tariff removed. During the course of his negotiations, Swift (a Whig) was offered the chance to become the editor of the Examiner, the acknowledged mouthpiece of the Tory party newly in power; he became "Mr. Examiner." "During the seven-month span from November 1710 to June 1711 when he served as the editor of the Examiner, Swift was the first lord of English political journalists" (Reinemeyer, 1). Despite this fact, and despite the continued, dedicated work Swift accomplished for the Harley regime in the years he worked for the Tory party, "... according to contemporary estimates of his deserts, he was treated badly in the final settlement" (D. H. Stevens, 37, n. 20). Swift had indignantly refused payment for his Examiners, although he undoubtedly had hoped for a significant preferment in the Church (Downie surmises that Swift had "hoped for a bishopric, or an English deanery at the very least, as a reward for his public services..." [Jonathan Swift,

Political Writer, 139]); what he received was an Irish deanery, which had a decent income, but was far removed from the centres of English life and power that he loved. The Examiner years, the opportunities which Swift saw as an auspicious beginning, were in fact the end of his rise in power and significance. Perhaps the most eloquent summation of Swift's feelings about his treatment by the government for whom he had worked so hard is his own: "... my greatest misery is recollecting the scene of twenty years past, and then all on a sudden dropping into the present. I remember when I was a little boy, I felt a great fish at the end of my line which I drew up almost on the ground, but it dropt in, and the disappointment vexeth me to this very day, and I believe it was the type of all my future disappointments" (Swift to Viscount Bolingbroke [Henry St. John] and Alexander Pope, 5 April 1729: Corres. III, 329).

Second, Swift saw the Examiner as a specific vehicle, created for specific ends. His comment in "Memoirs Relating to that Change which Happened in the Queen's Ministry" is telling: "This [i.e. personal dislike] I take to have been the principal ground of the Queen's resolutions to make a change of some offices both in her family and kingdom; and that these resolutions did not proceed from any real apprehension she had of danger to the church or monarchy" (PW VIII, 112). Considering Swift's consistent stance in the Examiner that the Queen's "real apprehension" was the exact reason for the change, Swift must have seen his role

as Examiner as a remarkably "political" manipulator; he wrote what was necessary at the time to accomplish what were defined as honourable ends.

Third, Swift had a strong sense of the temporality of his work: "... although the present Age may understand the little Hints we give, the Parallels we draw, and the Characters we describe; yet this will all be lost to the next" (PW III, 32). At the same time that Swift is convinced that the Examiner is strictly occasional, he expects from it long-term preferment for himself. This short term/long term split is evidenced in critics' commentary: Walter Graham's observation should be accurate: "... on the whole ... the Examiner has little value today outside the field of political journalism" (91), yet it must be balanced with Irvin Ehrenpreis's enthusiasm: "Swift seldom wrote better than in the Examiner" (Swift II, 409). I suspect that the truth is a combination of these two views: the Examiner is of value both to scholars of political journalism, and to scholars of Swift. The writing itself is masterful; its content, interesting, but largely to scholars.

The carefully defined, powerful stance of Swift's prose is a significant part of what sets the Examiner apart from many of the other journalistic endeavours of the period. Publicly, the Examiner was a success; its several goals were fulfilled admirably for Harley's government. Privately, the Examiner both raised and dashed any hopes

Swift had for significant preferment in the Church. Publicly, the Examiner was the all-powerful voice of Harley's government; privately, Swift admits that he had "not so much power as was believed" (PW VIII, 107).

It has become a critical truism that "Swift loved power" (V. Woolf, 72; and others); he also feared it. "Arbitrary power" is one of the main objects of attack in the Examiner: arbitrary power from "Popery," from absolute monarchy, from unworthy politicians or overambitious generals, was to be feared because of its very real threat to liberty. While power is a main object of attack, it is also a major purpose, for both Swift and Harley.

Edward W. Said has observed that "Swift's work is a persisting miracle of how much commentary an author's writing can accommodate and still remain problematic" (The World, the Text, and the Critic, 54). I think Said is correct, and that part of Swift's appeal is his ambiguity: between truth and power; public and private; the temporal and the permanent; Whig and Tory. They are ambiguities that are important--perhaps essential--throughout Swift's Examiner years.

Notes

Notes for Chapter 1

[1] See Harold Williams, "Introduction" to the Journal to Stella, especially xiv-xvii, for a good discussion of the difficulties Swift had in trying to negotiate with the Whig ministry of Godolphin.

[2] "If secured at all, [the First Fruits and the Twentieth Parts] could be gained, as they had been for England, only by political favour. It was Swift's business ... to watch the complexion of politics, and to learn how he might make the best terms for his Church" (Craik, 144).

[3] See, among others, David Green, in particular 214-20. Green is especially interested in the reaction of Queen Anne to the scandal produced by the trial of Dr. Sacheverell and the difficulties experienced by her as Dr. Sacheverell became, increasingly, a popular hero.

[4] "They tell me, all affairs in the Treasury are governed by Mr. Harley, and that he is the person usually applied to ..." (Corres. I, 172-3: Swift to Archbishop King, 9 September 1710).

[5] Journal to Stella, 4 October 1710: "... today, I was brought privately to Mr. Harley, who received me with the greatest respect and kindness imaginable...."

[6] Journal to Stella, 9 February 1711: Swift reports, with some satisfaction, that "The warrant is passed for the First-Fruits."

Notes for Chapter 3

[1] See, among others, Dorothy Marshall, especially 37-40, for a concise summary of the growth of literacy and the importance of an education in eighteenth century British society.

[2] One practical reason for this was the lapsing of the licencing act in 1695.

[3] Both Swift's remarks to Stella and his recruitment as a Tory propagandist, despite his Whig inclinations, would indicate that writers were chosen on the basis of skills and general political ideology, and not just on the basis of their political affiliation, as Foot suggests.

[4] Although Swift pretends that both of these virtues are his stock-in-trade. Reinemeyer calls "reasonableness" Swift's "favorite ploy" (109); Mercer claims that Swift "always demanded from his readers common sense, intelligence and a sense of humour" (165).

[5] Swift wrote to Archbishop King on 12 July 1711: "It seemeth to me that the Ministry Lie under a grievous Dilemma, from the Difficulty of continuing the War, and the Danger of an ill Peace; which I doubt, whether all their Credit with the Queen and Country would support them under..." (Corres. I, 237-8).

[6] "Robert Harley was a Shaftesburian Whig of the Old School. He had supported the banner of William of Orange with a troop of horse raised at his own expense, and had distinguished himself in the Convention Parliament as a hot

Whig, as he urged on extreme measures against those who had assailed and advised James III.... Becoming a leading figure in the alliance of Opposition Whigs and Tories known as the Country party, he dominated the proceedings of the House of Commons in the late 1690s, and was chosen Speaker in three successive Parliaments from 1701 to 1705" (Jonathan Swift, Political Writer, 136).

[7] This is from a letter from St. John to Sir William Windham (1753), quoted in Speck, "The Examiner Examined," 143-4, and Downie, Robert Harley and the Press, 126.

[8] "Mr. Harley told me ... That there was now an entirely new scene: That the Queen was resolved to employ none but those who were friends to the constitution of church and state: That their great difficulty lay in the want of some good pen, to keep up the spirit raised in the people, to assert the principles, and justify the proceedings of the new ministers" ("Memoirs Relating to that Change which Happened in the Queen's Ministry," PW VIII, 123).

[9] Contained in its entirety in PW III, "Appendix A," 221-7.

Notes for Chapter 5

[1] 9 September 1710, Journal to Stella: "Every Whig in great office will, to a man, be infallibly put out; and we shall have such a winter as hath not been seen in England."

[2] This is with regard to Swift's last visit to London, in 1709, when he had left the negotiations with Godolphin's Whigs extremely frustrated and angry.

[3] St. James's Coffee-house, a favorite haunt of the Whigs.

[4] Somers was a Whig; A Tale of a Tub was dedicated to him.

[5] Although Harley is mentioned earlier in Swift's correspondence; Swift wrote on 9 September 1710 to Archbishop King: "They tell me, all affairs in the Treasury are governed by Mr. Harley, and that he is the person usually applied to ..." (Corres. I, 172-3).

[6] This almost certainly refers to A Tale of a Tub, which had gone through a fifth edition in 1709, to the scandal of some and the delight of others.

[7] On 21 October 1710, Swift notes that he had "begged" for more funds than the First Fruits and Twentieth Parts alone would entail. His entry in the Journal to Stella is: "I know not whether I told you, that in my memorial which was given to the queen, I begged for two thousand pounds a year more...." This refers to "Impropriations" on certain Irish parishes held by the Queen; the amount is an estimate of their value by Swift.

See, also, "Appendix III" of the Journal to Stella (677-80).

[8] The bill finally passed through Parliament on 9 February 1711.

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